



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ST. JOSEPH WOMAN INDICTED FOR DEFRAUDING DISASTER RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS IN 9-11 SCHEME**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a St. Joseph woman was indicted by a federal grand jury today for defrauding several disaster relief organizations working to assist victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

**Cassaundra Estelle Montgomery**, 41, of St. Joseph, was charged in a 10-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury meeting in Kansas City.

Today's indictment alleges that **Montgomery** called the New York Police Department on September 25, 2001, and filed a false missing person report for a brother, Jeffrey David Montgomery, who, in fact, did not exist. **Montgomery** allegedly claimed that her brother had gone into the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11, 2001, to apply for a job at Cantor Fitzgerald, and was killed during the terrorist attacks. After filing that missing person report, contacting various charitable organizations, and submitting false documentation to them as proof of her brother's existence and death, **Montgomery** allegedly received \$63,817.94, in 10 separate payments between October 23, 2001 and December 26, 2001, from the American Red Cross, The September 11 Fund (the joint venture of United Way and The New York Community Trust), Safe Horizon, Inc., and the Robin Hood Relief Fund.

Today's indictment notes that thousands of people lost their lives on September 11, 2001, when two planes hijacked by terrorists crashed into the twin World Trade Center towers in New York City, New York. Thousands of people lost their lives, leaving tens of thousands suffering severe physical, emotional and economic losses. In the wake of the September 11 tragedy, charitable organizations distributed millions of dollars in relief funds to directly aid victims of the terrorist attacks and their families. **Montgomery** sought to illegally enrich herself by taking advantage of the tragedy, the indictment alleges.

“Those who died in the World Trade Center disaster are American heroes,” Graves said. “We will do everything in our power to protect their memory. This case is a top priority.”

According to the indictment, **Montgomery** falsely claimed that she was financially dependent on her brother. **Montgomery** allegedly received money from the charitable organizations to pay her personal expenses, including rent, utility bills, credit card bills, medical expenses, a new PT Cruiser automobile, and other bills and expenses.

As part of the scheme to defraud and to prove her brother’s existence, **Montgomery** allegedly sent the American Red Cross a false Missouri Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation and Collection, Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate, W-4 for Jeffrey D. Montgomery, bearing a fictitious Social Security account number, a fictitious Master Card statement for a joint account in her name and the name of her nonexistent brother, and caused a false “Application for Letters” to be filed in the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Mo., for the estate of her nonexistent brother.

In furtherance of the scheme, to document her relationship with her nonexistent brother and to show her financial dependence on him, the indictment alleges that **Montgomery** created and sent the American Red Cross a false rental contract for an apartment that she purportedly shared with her brother, listing the tenant as Jeffrey D. Montgomery and bearing the false signature of her brother. **Montgomery** also allegedly created fictitious mail addressed to him at the apartment.

In furtherance of the scheme to defraud, **Montgomery** allegedly sent the American Red Cross a signed affidavit for issuance of a death certificate for her nonexistent brother. In the affidavit, she falsely claimed, among other things, that she last heard from her brother at approximately 7:50 a.m. on September 11, 2001, when he called her stating that he was on an elevator at the World Trade Center.

**Montgomery** allegedly requested \$2,000 from the American Red Cross to pay for a memorial service and \$3,427 to pay for a cement memorial for her nonexistent brother.

Each of the 10 counts of the federal indictment charges a separate act of mail fraud, in which **Montgomery** caused checks made payable to herself to be issued by the four charitable organizations and mailed to her St. Joseph address. According to the indictment, seven checks from the American Red Cross, ranging in amounts from \$600 to \$17,217.90, totaled \$38,817.90. The indictment also alleges that **Montgomery** received a \$10,000 check from Safe Horizons, a \$10,000 check from The September 11 Fund, and a \$5,000 check from the Robin Hood Relief Fund.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christina Y. Tabor. It was

investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at  
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